Arlinda

Report on the Pre-Enrollment Program - Effective Writing, Math and Study Skills

In reviewing the academic components of the August 81 Pre-Enrollment Program entitled "Effective Writing", "Math" and "Study Skills", I gathered the following information:

Effective Writing - The students generally felt that the review of grammar offered in this course was very helpful. While the skills covered in this course were skills all students should have learned prior to coming to Middlebury, some found that they were introduced to things that they had not had before.

The Grammar handbook used in the Effective Writing component was found to be a great help to the students. Many of them continue to use this book for writing papers during the school year.

Math - The idea of a Mathematics component for the pre-enrollment program was received with great enthusiasm by the majority of students. However, due to the diverse academic backgrounds of the participants, difficulties were experienced as a result of the pace set for the course. Some students found the material quite difficult and too much for the three week time period. Other students commented that they were bored because the material was a review of math courses taken in high school.

Most students enjoyed the inclusion of an Introduction To Computers. The greatest benefit of this component appears to have been to give those students suffering some anxiety about taking math in college the confidence to pursue higher level math courses. Positive contact with Professor Martin seems to have had great influence on the student's attitudes toward continuing math at Middlebury.

Study Skills - Many students commented on the Study Skills component of the program. While there were a few students who professed not to be in need of a Study Skills course, the majority of the students felt it was a good idea. They did complain that there were too many techniques presented in a short span of time. For some, the techniques proposed appeared too drastic or overwhelming and at times students found them tedious.

Students felt that there was a need for homework assignments and more individual evaluation. Students cited the video taping session as a helpful form of evaluation.

Most students would like to see the Study Skills component continued, but with greater focus on a few important Study Skills.

Recommendations -

1. While students found the Effective Writing Grammar review helpful, almost all expressed a need for more practice in researching and writing papers. Because it would be difficult to add this component to the existing grammar course, I would propose adding a course which focuses on analytical writing. Another possibility is to expand the seminar course to include paper research and writing.

2. The program appears to need a general increase in the amount of homework assigned. Perhaps the inclusion of a paper writing component would combat the student's complaints that the program is too "easy" and "camplike".

3. Addition of a typing course. Having students type all assignments would increase their time commitment to the program while teaching them a skill essential for the regular school year.

4. I recommend that we do not change any major aspect of the Math component. It is my feeling that the discrepancies cited above in the student's academic preparation will continue to be a factor in all of the courses offered during the program. Mathematics happened to be the course where it is most apparent. I feel this diversity helps to give students an accurate idea of the academic atmosphere that they will encounter once the school year begins.